

I claim:

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1.

A food container, comprising:

a shell having an inner portion and an outer portion operatively coupled to said inner portion;

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said inner portion being shaped to hold food;

said outer portion being spaced from said inner portion to form a chamber having a volume for holding a temperature storing medium;

said shell being shaped to define an expansion zone within said chamber which is sized

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and shaped to receive expanded portions of said temperature storing medium caused by a change in temperature within said temperature storing medium.

2.

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The food container of claim 1 further comprising an opening formed within said shell to permit the selective insertion or removal of said temperature storing medium within or from said chamber.

3.

The food container of claim 2 further comprising cap means for selectively closing said opening within said shell.

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4.

The food container of claim 2 wherein said opening is formed at a location within said shell that substantially prevents said temperature storing medium from entering

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1           said expansion zone while said temperature storing medium is being inserted within  
said chamber.

5.

5           The food container of claim 2 wherein said outer portion of said shell is shaped  
to have a support structure extending outwardly from said shell

6.

10          The food container of claim 5 wherein said support structure forms a portion of  
the volume of said chamber.

7.

10          The food container of claim 6 wherein said portion of the volume of said chamber  
formed by said support structure defines at least a portion of said expansion zone.

8.

15          The food container of claim 7 wherein said opening is formed closely adjacent  
said support structure.

9.

17          The food container of claim 6 wherein said support structure is expandable to  
create additional volume within said chamber.

20          10.

20          The food container of claim 9 wherein said support structure automatically  
expands in response to a pressure increase within said chamber.

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11.

1      The food container of claim 9 wherein said support structure is provided with  
accordion-shaped sides to permit expansion.

12.

5      The food container of claim 9 wherein said additional volume within said  
chamber defines a substantial portion of said expansion zone.

13.

10     The food container of claim 1 further comprising at least one depression formed  
within said inner portion.

14.

15     The food container of claim 13 further comprising a bowl member that is sized  
and shaped to be at least partially disposed within said at least one depression.

16.

20     The food container of claim 13 wherein said at least one depression is shaped  
and sized to hold food.

17.

25     The food container of claim 1 further comprising a lid having upper and lower  
surfaces that is selectively engageable within said shell to define a food cavity between  
said inner portion of said shell and the lower surface of said lid when said lid is engaged  
with said shell.

17.

1      The food container of claim 16 wherein said lid is provided with an inner chamber for holding a volume of temperature storing medium.

18.

5      The food container of claim 17 wherein the lower surface of said lid is shaped to hold portions of the food when said lower surface of said lid is faced upwardly.

19.

10     The food container of claim 17 wherein the lower surface of said lid is shaped to have at least one depression formed therein.

20.

The food container of claim 19 wherein the upper surface of said lid is operatively engageable with said shell adjacent said inner portion so that the lower surface of said lid is positioned to face upwardly and serve to hold the food.

21.

15     The food container of claim 20 further comprising a bowl member, said bowl member being sized and shaped to be at least partially received within said at least one depression.

22.

20     The food container of claim 13 further comprising an said opening formed within said at least one depression to permit the selective insertion or removal of said temperature storing medium within or from said chamber.

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23.

1       The food container of claim 19 further comprising at least one depression being  
formed within the inner portion of said shell.

24.

5       The food container of claim 23 further comprising a bowl; said bowl being sized  
and shaped to be at least partially received within the at least one depression formed  
within the inner portion of said shell or the at least one depression formed within the  
lower surface of said lid.

25.

10      The food container of claim 1 wherein said shell is selectively separable into a  
plurality of separate shell portions; said plurality of separate shell portions comprising a  
portion of the inner and outer portions of said shell.

26.

15      The food container of claim 25 wherein said plurality of separate shell portions is  
provided with an inner chamber that is adapted for holding the temperature storing  
medium.

27.

20      The food container of claim 25 wherein a portion of said expansion zone is  
provided within the inner chamber of each of said separate shell portions.

28.

1       The food container of claim 27 wherein each of said plurality of separate shell portions are provided with a mating surface that is operatively releasably engageable with a mating surface of another of said plurality of separate shell portions.

5       29.

5       The food container of claim 28 further comprising locking means for releasably locking the mating surfaces of said plurality of separate shell portions to one another.

30.

10      The food container of claim 28 wherein the outer portion of said shell is shaped to have a support structure extending outwardly from said shell; said support structure forming at least a portion of said expansion zone.

31.

15      The food container of claim 30 wherein said support structure is expandable to create additional volume within said chamber.

32.

20      The food container of claim 30 wherein said support structure automatically expands in response to a pressure increase within said chamber.

33.

25      The food container of claim 28 wherein said support structure is provided with accordion-shaped sides to permit expansion.

34.

1       The food container of claim 33 further comprising at least one depression formed  
within said inner portion.

35.

5       The food container of claim 16 further comprising a lid having upper and lower  
surfaces that is selectively engageable within said shell to define a food cavity between  
said inner portion of said shell and the lower surface of said lid when said lid is engaged  
with said shell.

36.

10      The food container of claim 17 wherein said lid is provided with an inner chamber  
for holding a volume of temperature storing medium.

37.

15      The food container of claim 18 wherein the lower surface of said lid is shaped to  
hold portions of the food when said lower surface of said lid is faced upwardly.

38.

20      The food container of claim 19 wherein the lower surface of said lid is shaped to  
have at least one depression formed therein.

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